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ABSTRACT

Educational specifications for a center for trainable mentally handicapped children are outlined. Philosophy and objectives and discernable curriculum trends for the future are provided. The site (planning, development, playground area, pupil transportation), the program (what the teacher does, what the student does or way of work, size of groups, school day - hours for students and teachers), space requirements (two preprimary rooms, two primary, and two intermediate rooms, supplementary office area, one clinic, one teacher's workroom, outside storage space for physical education equipment, and custodial storage space), special considerations (safety), and arrangement of facilities are discussed. (CD) <

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ALACHUA COUNTY

Educational Specifications

for

CENTER FOR TRAINABLE MENTALLY RETARDED

1969

Alachua County School Board
W. S. Talbot, Superintendent
Gainesville, Florida, 32601

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

The Special Education Session of the 1968 Florida Legislature enacted into law the first phase of a program to provide an educational opportunity for all exceptional children by 1973. (Section 3, Chapter 68-23 Laws of Florida)

Section III of Senate Bill 86X appropriated from the general revenue fund for the 1968-69 fiscal year the sum of $2,500,000.00 which shall be distributed to individual school districts for capital outlay purposes to provide critical specialized facility needs for exceptional children.

In October 1968, a proposed project was submitted to Dr. Landis Stetler, Director of Education of Exceptional Children, State Department of Education, asking for $135,000.00 to build a much needed facility for Trainable Mentally Retarded Children in Alachua County. The four classes which we now have for these children in our public school system do not adequately meet the needs of the children so identified already. In 1973 when it becomes mandatory for Trainable Mentally Retarded Children to be accepted into our schools, we must be prepared to meet their needs.

Tuesday, February 4, 1969, the State Cabinet gave final approval for the project, granting Alachua County $135,000.00 to construct a Center for "Rehousing and expansion of programs by adding six classrooms and related facilities to the Sidney Lanier Elementary School."

Lucy T. Beckum
Supervisor, Education
of Exceptional Children

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Alachua County School Board

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Charles E. Palmour, Principal
Sidney Lanier Elementary School

Phyllis Perkins, Coordinator
Mentally Retarded

Linda Ramsey, Coordinator
Speech Therapy

Dee Wagner, Teacher
Trainable Mentally Retarded

Merilyn Shad, Teacher
Trainable Mentally Retarded

Mary Koru, Supervisor
Early Childhood Education

Jean Hobgood
Association for Retarded Children

James D. McGinley, AIA Architect
Appointed by the School Board

-OUTLINE OF PROJECT-

(As originally submitted October 1968)

Facilities For Exceptional Child Education Program

PROJECT REQUEST

Center For Trainable Mentally Retarded

Sidney Lanier Campus

$135,000.00

I Administrative Office - serve also as a conference room, speech therapy and hearing testing

II Clinic - with a bathroom (including tub).

III Teachers' Workroom
- a. restroom
- b. built-in storage space for materials and supplies
- c. sink and counter top

IV Six Classrooms
- a. with sink and counter top space
- b. Toilet facilities for each
- c. built-in storage space
- d. numerous electrical outlets for use with electrical equipment
- e. one room to be equipped with shop equipment (classroom size)
- f. possibly folding walls between part of the classrooms for large group activities

V Outside storage space for physical education equipment, wheel toys, etc.

VI Custodial storage space and heating and cooling equipment

VII Fencing

VIII Site Work

IX Architectural Fees.

EDUCATIONAL SPECIFICATIONS FOR CENTER

FOR

TRAINABLE MENTALLY RETARDED

I. PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES

Philosophy

Alachua County School Board states its philosophy as follows:

> "Our schools should be organized, administered, and conducted in such a way that opportunities are provided for individuals to realize their full potential in a democratic society.
>
> Schools should find ways to identify each pupil as a unique person, guide him in development of his special talents, and enable him to take his place among his fellowmen without inhibiting or destroying his individuality."

It is the intent of the Board to provide special instruction and services for exceptional children and youth to make equitable the opportunities of public school programs by facilitating the unique conditions essential for the identification, evaluation, adjustment and learning of these children in so far as it is financially possible in fairness to all students.

Objectives - General -

To help the Trainable Mentally Retarded child make personal, social, emotional, physical and mental adjustments, in a public school setting that will enable him to function in society at the highest level possible according to his ability.

Objectives - Specific -

To provide an atmosphere that will stimulate the natural interests which the child has in the world around him.

To encourage him to observe, explore, experiment and test.

To assist him in his social development so that he will get along well with other children.

To encourage him to plan activities, accept responsibility for his acts, share with others, obey rules and care for his own property.

To teach him the proper use of materials and provide opportunities for him to acquire dexterity in their use.

To provide activities that will help him to develop listening comprehension and intelligible oral expression.

To provide activities that will assist in gross motor development so that he may become more mobile.

To provide activities that will develop and coordinate the smaller muscles so that later he may learn to print his name, and other simple words.

To provide experiences that will stimulate the child to develop fully at his own stage of growth and lay a foundation for the years ahead.

II. THE DISCERNABLE CURRICULUM TRENDS FOR THE FUTURE

Trainable mentally retarded children live in an in-between world; they are not so mentally deficient as to require constant care, but neither are they capable enough to be able to live without semi-shelter or supervision. They have the ability to live in the community and are able to benefit from a specifically structured program within the public schools.

They may be expected to benefit from a sequential training program within a small group setting designed to further their social - economic usefulness in a home, sheltered environment, or residential setting. This may be accomplished through a sequentially developed program which incorporates -

self-care
social adjustment
physical activity
motor development
speech and language development
work habits and skills
vocational readiness (practical skills).

To attain the goals toward which the teachers of trainable mentally retarded children are working, the program would be developed around the following framework:

communication skills
motor coordination
emotional adjustment
self-concept
self-care and health
social adjustment

recreational and diversional activities
safety
moral and spiritual values
aesthetic appreciation
economic usefulness

Trainable mentally retarded children at 16 years of age should move into a community and/or parent sponsored activities and workshop program in a setting away from the regular academic school.

III. SITE

Planning

The site for this center for trainable mentally retarded children was chosen so that it would be adjacent to a regular elementary school in order to take advantage of the already established lunchroom services and to make use of a regular playground for the older trainable children.

Development

Since this center will be located on an already developed school ground, a minimum of development will be required. It will be necessary to locate the building site, bus loading zone and fenced play areas for the younger children so that they will not interfere in any way with the activities of the regular elementary school. The new building will be functionally and aesthetically complementary to the existing structure. The possible placement of a connecting walkway between the two plants should be considered. Landscape additions should be carefully planned and finances set aside to provide for same.

Playground Area

Safety is a major factor in the planning of this area. The playground area for the pre-primary and primary classes should be enclosed by a fence with a lockable gate for their protection and for freedom of outside play, even though the overall school yard is already fenced from roads and drives.

The play area should have both grass and hardtop areas, in sun and shade. Perhaps a covered patio could be considered.

An outside sink and water fountain are most important.

A toilet room accessible from the outside is desirable in order to make full use of the playyard as a teaching station.

The intermediate classes may take advantage of the ball courts and paved areas already provided in the regular school yard.

Pupil Transportation

Consideration should be given to the following items:

All pupils will be transported either by special school buses or by parents.

Bus driveway should be circular and one-way and for buses only. A covered loading ramp should be provided.

Automobile driveway should serve parents, teachers and visitors. It should be one-way and give access to a parking area.

IV. THE PROGRAM

A. What the teacher does -

The teacher and room must be most flexible to meet the constantly changing needs of the trainable child

Day to day general routine should be followed to avoid confusion for the pupil, although specific activities of the teacher vary greatly during the day

Makes provision for the safety, health and comfort of these children which is of utmost importance

Maintains constant supervision, indoors and outdoors

Plans with co-workers for activities and programs

Collects, prepares and appropriately places materials for easy access for daily use

Ascertains the present functioning level of development of each child in the class and works with him accordingly

Completes records and reports as identified by administration

Continually circulates among the small groups and/or individuals during their various activities

Guides the whole group when they come together for sharing experiences

Councils with parents about their child; helps them to recognize the interdependence of school, family and community

Interprets the program of the Trainable Mentally Retarded to school patrons and other interested community groups

Prepares the pupil, parents and community for the eventual time when the Trainable Mentally Retarded child will move from the public schools to the community sponsored center or sheltered workshop.

B. What the student does or ways of work -

The mental age as well as the chronological age of these pupils must be kept in mind when considering their ways of work.

Pre-Primary and Primary

Sometimes the children work together as a group in activities that require space -

to sit at tables
to respond to rhythms
to sit on the floor together for -
sharing experiences
story telling
singing.

Sometimes the children work in small groups, or individually in these kinds of activities -

building with large floor blocks
building with small blocks
housekeeping in a playhouse center
choosing table activities, such as pictures and puzzles, manipulative and put-together toys
caring for pets and plants
enjoying library books
listening to records
using materials in the art area; painting at the easel, clay modeling, finger painting, pasting, cutting with scissors
at work bench - hammering and sawing
using skill games as rolling balls, horseshoes, bean bags, jump ropes
riding small steel toys and playing with small cars, trucks, trains, planes
making use of the outdoor part of the classroom; in the sandbox (digging, constructing roads, etc.)
climbing, swinging, jumping.

Intermediate I and II (Older groups)

In addition to the many things listed already for the pre-primary and primary age groups, the older trainable pupils will enter into a program more closely related to develop-

ing skills used in and around the home such as -

doing simple cooking and other related housekeeping activities; having experiences in sweeping, dusting and mopping, window and mirror cleaning, cleaning of bathroom fixtures, and emptying wastepaper baskets;
learning to do some simple sewing ,
extending art experiences to include crafts projects,
woodworking activities involving the use of hammers, saws, rulers and screwdrivers for making simple objects ,
painting, shellacing and sanding,
caring for the yard by mowing, trimming, raking, sweeping sidewalks, watering lawns,
gardening - simple flowers and vegetables.

C. Size of Groups

GUIDE FOR CLASS DIMENSIONS

Class Range	C. A. Range	M. A. Range	Enrollment
Pre-Primary	6-7	3-4	5-10
Primary	8-9	$3\frac{1}{2}$-$4\frac{1}{2}$	5.10
Intermediate I	10-12	4-$6\frac{1}{2}$	8-12
Intermediate II	13-15	$4\frac{1}{2}$-$7\frac{1}{2}$	8-12

In space planning, the chronological age must be considered, and in ways of work, mental age is of most importance.

D. School Day

Students - 8:30 A. M. - 2:30 P. M.
Teachers - 8:00 A. M. - 4:00 P. M. for planning, teaching, and materials preparation.

V. SPACE REQUIREMENTS

Six Classrooms to be used as follows:

2 pre-primary rooms to meet level 3, Accreditation Standards, must each contain a minimum of 850 square feet of floor space. These children of chronological ages 6 and 7, have a mental age of 3 or 4 years, and operate very similarily to nursery and/or kindergarten children.

2 primary rooms for children with chronological ages of 8 and 9 and mental ages of 3½ through 4½. This group functions only slightly higher than the pre-primary so they also require a minimum of 850 square feet of floor space.

In these four rooms -
the design should allow for division into work, play and instructional areas
carpet should be laid to-
further reduce auditory stimuli,
create a safer environment,
provide additional surface for instruction,
there should be direct access to the special fenced in area .

2 intermediate rooms, each to house twelve students with chronological ages of 10-16 and mental ages of 4 through 8. To meet level 3 Accreditation Standards, a minimum of 850 square feet per room is required.

If the cost is not too prohibitive, a folding wall between these two rooms would allow for the sharing of many activities. A site barrier is less desirable for use with trainable mentally retarded.

In one room, there should be a crafts work area of approximately 300 square feet for-
metal,
leather,
simple woodwork,
clay, etc.
a work bench for mounting simple-
jig saws,
tool rack
a broom closet for clean-up.

In the second room there should be a kitchen area of approximately 300 square feet for-
electric range
refrigerator
sink
cabinet space for-
set of dishes
some simple cooking utensils
drawer space for-
"silver" flatwear, and dish towels.

All areas involving work and craft type functions will have suitable floor finishes to accomodate this function.

Supplementary Office Area

This space will serve as supplementary classroom area and should contain approximately 144 square feet. It will be used at various times for psychological testing, parent conferences and speech therapy.

Furniture space need for-
- office desk
- office chair
- conference table
- 6 conference chairs
- small book case for professional books

Baseboard appliance outlets
Telephone jack
Blackboard, approximately 3 ft x 3 ft
Bulletin Board, approximately 3 ft x 3 ft
Mirror, approximately 3 ft x 3 ft.

One Clinic with bathroom

Children who become ill at school will be kept here only long enough for parents to come for them.

The clinic should contain space for-
- 2 cots - separated by a curtain
- 2 chairs
- First Aid cabinet which is high and requires the use of a key to open
- Small storage cabinet for sheets and pillow cases.

The bathroom should include a tub, as this room will be utilized as a training station in housekeeping activities for the intermediate classes.

One Teachers' Workroom

This area will serve as a workroom, storage space and teacher's personal restroom. It should contain-
- a sink with counter top work space
- cabinets above and beneath this area for storage of such items as tempra and finger paints, laquers, clay, paste, and other such media that require the use of water in preparation for classroom use,
- some counter top space in an area away from the sink (with no cabinets beneath, to be used as desk area for sitting to prepare slides, ditto sheets, transparancies, etc.

Electrical outlets for use in this work area
cabinet space for quantity storage of paper such as
$8\frac{1}{2}$x$11\frac{1}{2}$ ditto and colored construction
12"x18" construction
36"x36" newsprint and poster board

Storage shelves for books to be utilized by teachers in planning - approximately 20 linear feet of adjustable shelves
2 film strip projectors
2 overhead projectors
2 tape recorders
3 record players

Space for-
typewriter table and typewriter
refrigerator for storage of snack-time supplies
four drawer file cabinet
six chairs
Storage space for teachers' coats
restroom with toilet, lavatory and mirror over the lavatory

Outside Storage Space for physical education equipment and wheel toys

This does not need to be a large area but special consideration should be given to shelving with several dividers spaced every few feet for teaching the children to put away play equipment in a specific, well identified place. High shelving could be used by the teachers for storage of extra supplies.

Custodial Storage Space - Heating and Cooling Equipment Housing

This center, being a part of a regular school, would not need a large custodial storage space. A service closet attached to the center should be equipped with-

a slop sink with hot and cold running water
shelving for paper towels, toilet paper and cleaning supplies
space for storage of a vacuum cleaner,
mop bucket and mops,
brooms,
small quanity of sweeping compound,
custodial service truck, 4'x3'x2'

Heating and Cooling equipment may or may not be housed in the same area as the custodial closet, depending on the feasibleness

of this arrangement when the architect considers the economic practicalness of the heating and cooling equipment.

VI. Special Consideration

The entire building should be constructed and equipped so as to maximize the safety of these "functionally very young children".

All electrical outlets should be provided with safety covers
All switches in the pre-primary and primary rooms should be key operated
Electrical outlets should be spaced rather close together to eliminate the use of extension cords
A 220 volt line will be needed in one intermediate room for the electric range
An electric clock in each room is important
Hot water faucets should have thermo-controls
Provision should be made for light control (reastat) for lessening illumination when using audio-visual equipment - (T.M.R. children are often freightened if all lights are turned off)
Climate control should be provided by means of a central system that provides effective ventilation, air conditioning, and heating that is thermostatically controlled
Thermostats should have a protective cover to prevent tampering by students

All classrooms should -

be accoustically treated for lessening of extraneous noises
have a low sink and drinking fountain attached, with ample counter space for cleaning such things as water-paint brushes, toy dishes, etc.
utilize space beneath this area for closed storage cabinets
have soft pastel wall colors to help relieve tensions and calm these children
have a full-length mirror to aid in teaching self-care and body-part identification
have a minimum of 12 lineal feet (36 in. wide) of chalkboard
have a minimum of 48 sq. ft. of tack board
use white magnetic board - rather than the usual audio-visual screen, (consider seated eye-level comfort when installing)
have coat storage area, either with a door or else be placed in a vestibule to help eliminate a cluttered, distracting appearance

(coat storage areas should be deep enough to allow for the use of coat hangers on a rod for training purposes)

Approximately 10% of classroom area allocated for storage space.

As much as possible, use sliding doors to screen from view the things not in current use so that there is a minimum of distractions from the "subject of the moment".

In the rest rooms, consider using wall hung toilets for cleanliness rather than floor installations.

VII. ARRANGEMENT OF FACILITIES

The pre-primary and primary rooms should be adjacent to the fenced play area, preferably on the south side of the building, to take advantage of the winter sun.

The intermediate rooms should be adjacent to each other.

Either individual or easily accessible toilets should be provided for each of the six classrooms. It is preferable that the toilets adjoin, but not open directly into the rooms.

Consideration might be given to a connecting passageway between the two pre-primary and between the two primary rooms, along which should be two lavatories, one for boys and one for girls. If this is done, either a glass top door, or a window should be placed so that the restroom doors are in sight of the teachers.

The clinic with full bath will be utilized as one means of training in housekeeping activities for the intermediate classes. This should be kept in mind when planning its location.

The teacher's workroom should be in central location for ease of access from all rooms because of storage of shared large equipment.

The supplementary office area should be near the main entrance to the center for ease of accessibility.

It will be used as supplementary classroom area, for speech therapy and conferences.